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Corruption Eradication in Nigeria: An Appraisal

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Introduction

Some of the things that cause poverty in Nigeria are the Nigerian ruling and business elite. The ruling elite lack the kind of philosophical and ideological vision and orientation that is committed to developing "a dream society." They have no dream beyond the satisfaction of desires. This paper examines the nature of corruption in Nigeria.

Definition

Corruption is a social problem that has interested many scholars. Ruzindana (1999) asserts that corruption in Africa is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they interact. He also identified the types of corruption in Africa as bribery, private gain, and other benefits to non-existent workers and pensioners (called ghost workers). The dishonest and illegal behavior exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain is corruption. According to the ICPC Act (section 2), corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud, and other related offences. Corruption is the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit (monetary or otherwise).

Corruption is a symptom of numerous difficulties within contemporary societies. It usually involves more than one party. It takes a form of an organized crime. At times, an organization can be established on corruption to beget corruption. Gbenga (2008) asserts that corruption is contagious. According to the perception index of Transparency International, Nigeria was ranked 144th out of the 146 countries, beating Bangladesh and Haiti to last position. An analysis of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences. It is now dawning on the Nigerian public that the so-called private enterprise and legislators are free from scrutiny, and governors claim to be immune. Corruption is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, and misuse of public offices, positions, and privileges, embezzlement of public funds, public books, publications, documents, valuable security, and accounts. Corruption can be systematic in nature and affect the whole life of an organization or society.

Corruption in Nigeria

John Locke outlined the doctrine of the separation of powers, indicating the danger of oppressive and arbitrary rule when all functions of government are exercised by a single person or institution. The growing corruption in Nigeria can be traced to people holding power at the federal, state, and local government levels. Corruption does not involve just people in government, but also to people in both private and public positions and even traditional rulers .

President Olusegun Obasanjo presented a bill to the national assembly on “the prohibition and punishment of bribery, corruption, and other related offences bill of 1999”. Obasanjo's regime has certainly fired the most critical shot at corruption in Nigeria in recent times. At the federal level, it cannot be business as usual in Nigeria. Corruption has also spread to both the state and local government levels, as well as some decentralized centers of power and authority.

Thomson (2004) reports on the then National Electric Power Authority (NEPA):

There were powerful views on the problems of corruption. ... You need tip them to get them to rectify a problem, said one, while some people in the focus group thought transformer were being vandalized by NEPA officials to warrant either replacement or repair of the transformer.

Within the educational sector in Nigeria, especially from secondary to university levels, corruption is very pervasive, and most of which is not in the public eye. Corruption in education includes:

Corrupt Practices by Parents of Students

Parents are known to have used unorthodox means to influence their children's or wards' admission to federal government secondary schools, commonly referred to as unity schools. A high JAMB score is critical for admission in to the university in Nigeria, and this has led to cheating by some students and parents. There are expensive coaching centers that charge exorbitant fees to guarantee a minimum score of 300 in the JAMB score, which is been orchestrated by coaching centers through aiding and abetting cheating in the JAMB examination with the connivance of JAMB officials.

Corrupt Practices by Lecturers

Within the university system, some students resort to "sorting" (finding ways of purchasing of high and unmerited mark from a lecturer in order to enhance the grade in their final examination.) Such students will then say they have gone into the university and having what they not work for. Lecturers and students print fake receipts, which they use in collecting school fees, and some unsuspecting students are usually discovered by the audit department.

Corrupt Practice by Police

It has been alleged that some unscrupulous officers rent firearms to criminals who use them to harass the public and engage in highway robberies. The police are also alleged to be collecting an unauthorized fee before granting bail to anyone who is arrested. Some police in traffic control collect a graduated illegal charge on all operators of inter- and intra-city. Some tax officials are alleged to be using two types of receipts to collect revenue. Once receipt is the original, and hence genuine, while the second is usually a false one for the collector.s private use, thus depriving government of its legitimate revenue (Bello Iman 2005)

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

With unchecked, unbridled, and uncontrolled, power, humans become corrupt. According to Thomas Hobbes, "life becomes solitary, nasty, brutish, and short." Our previous colonial background has been identified by scholars. Our colonial heritage has altered our values and perception of morality; some of the causes of corruption are:

- Trade Restriction. This is Government-induced source of rent seeking/corruption. The restriction on importation of foreign automobiles are examples of how government officials and politicians can make quick money via rent seeking/corruption.
- Government subsidies. When government allocates scarce resources to individuals and firms using legal criteria other than the ability or willingness to pay, corruption is likely to be the result. Corruption can thrive under industrial policies that allow poorly-targeted subsidies to be appropriated by firms for which they are not intended.
- Price controls. The purpose is to lower the price of some goods below market value. For social and political reason, these are also a source of corruption.
- Low wages in civil service. When public wages are low, public servants may be compelled to use their official positions to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet, particularly when the chances of being caught are low.
- Sociological factors. Multi-ethnic societies may be more likely to fall prey to corruption as a result of failure to manage ethnic conflict in a way that is fair to everyone.

Effect of Corruption on Nation-Building

Many have noted the effects of corruption on nation-building. Development scholars observe this effect. Corruption has an adverse effect on social and economic development and also in building a nation. The effects include:

- Diversion of development resources for private gain
- Misallocation of talent
- Lost tax revenue
- Negative impact on quality of infrastructure and public services
- Slowing of economic growth.

Role of Law Enforcement in Combating Corruption

Before President Olusegun Obasanjo's regime, the police and some related agencies were the only ones fighting corruption. When Obasanjo became president in 1999, the Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) were put in place, they have dealt seriously with the pandemic situation. The EFCC and ICPC have a number of roles in fighting corruption in Nigeria. The ICPC is not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority. The EFCC collaborates with international and local agencies.

Solutions

In order to prevent corruption from happening at all, Nigerian should emphasize transparency, integrity, and accountability in all their private and public transaction. There Achanism Model is named for Achan who appears in the Old Testament of the Bible. Achan in the scripture was avaricious (Joshua 7). He was caught and his entire family was severely dealt with. His children, who might have expected to inherit the proceeds of his illegal act were not allowed to do so. The solution is as follows:

- Social Transformation. Transformation in education of the public is a necessary factor in social transformation. There is need for formation and reformation, orientation and re-orientation of the minds and heart of Nigerians, for them to see that corruption is the enemy of development.
- Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Law. The law should be enforced to its fullest and without fear and favor.
- Improvement of Sociopolitical and Economic Life. This is another weapon against corruption in Nigeria. The multiplying effects of this improvement will reduce the tendency of public servants to demand and take bribes and get involved in other corrupt practices.

Conclusion

Corruption in Nigeria is systematic, and to address the problem a systematic approach is needed. To curb and eventually eradicate corruption, children, youth, and adults must be given the power to distinguish right from wrong. All schools should return to the teaching of moral education to empower children with the spirit of stewardship, while adults live exemplary lives, reflecting truth, kindness, dignity of labour, and integrity. Permit me to conclude with this popular Yoruba moral song on corruption.

1. Kini ni no fole se laye timo wa (2x)

Laye ti mo wa kaka kin jale

Kaka kin jale makuku deru.

Kini ni no fole se laye timo wa.

2. Eni to jale adele ejo (2x)

Adajo awa fewon si lese

Fewon si lese bi olugbe

Eni to jale Adele ejo

3. Aye ema fole segbe ti moni (2x)

Egbe ti moni ewon ko sun won

Ewon ko sun won fomoluwabi

Aye ema fole segbe ti mo ni.

4. Oluwa ma fole segbe ti mo ni (2x)

Egbe ti mo ni kaka kin jale

Kaka kojale bo ba ku to

Aye ema fole s'gbe ti mo ni.

5. Beni to jaleba Lola laye(2x)

Balola laye kole rorun wo

Kole rorun wo bolojo bade

Beni to jale Balola laye.

The condition of peace of mind is contentment. Thirst for ease of mind. Get satisfaction, be placed with what you have changed to grow, and serve our nation, for God's sake. Look to see the miseries and damages of graft. Listen today to learn and beautify your society

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